NEWS RELEASE

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS **BUILDING STRONG®**

Release: NR12-205 Drought Webinar
For Immediate Release:
July 23, 2012

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Invite: Ohio River Basin Drought Assessment Webinar

WHO: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the National Weather Service

WHAT: In some areas of the Ohio River Basin, waterways and lakes are hitting record low water levels due to drought conditions which are expected to extend throughout the summer. These dry conditions impact water quality, navigation, recreation, water safety, and public health due to an elevated risk of harmful algae blooms and water-related hazards. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in partnership with the National Weather Service is providing this Ohio River Basin Drought Assessment to inform the media of the current and forecasted weather conditions, the impacts of the drought, and the ongoing effort to mitigate these impacts. [SEE Drought Report below for more specifics.]

WHEN: 10:30 a.m. EST, Monday, July 23, 2012

WEBINAR ACCESS:

AUDIO CONFERENCE ACCESS INFORMATION:
* USA Toll-Free: (877)807-5706
* PARTICIPANT CODE: 779340

WEB MEETING ACCESS INFORMATION:
* Web Meeting Address: https://www.webmeeting.att.com
* Meeting Number(s): (877)807-5706
* PARTICIPANT CODE: 779340

* Conference Arranger: Chris Simms; Arranger Phone Number: (256)774-1249

***The first time you use the Web Meeting Service, you will need to download the client software. Web Meeting HELP & Software Downloads can be found at: https://www.webmeeting.att.com*

RESOURCES: For information on reservoir & river conditions, please visit: http://www.lrd-wc.usace.army.mil/lrdwc.html
For information on weather forecasts, please visit: http://www.weather.gov/ohrfc/WRO.shtml
To view and download drought presentations, please visit: www.lrd.usace.army.mil

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OHIO RIVER BASIN DROUGHT REPORT, July 20, 1012

Drought continues to intensify across the majority of the Ohio River Valley. Severe to extreme drought is shown across southern Wisconsin and Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, western Kentucky, and Tennessee. Exceptional drought has expanded near the Ohio River from southwestern Indiana downstream to southern Illinois.

- Rainfall over the past week ranges from less than 20 percent of normal west of Lake Michigan, in Indiana, Illinois and all other areas near the Mississippi River to 200 percent or more of normal for other areas near and south of the Ohio River in Kentucky, Tennessee and West Virginia.
- Moderate rainfall (1-3") is forecast near and south of the Ohio River with less than an inch to the north. Due to the dry conditions, any rain that does fall is not forecast to cause major runoff or significantly improve the large-scale drought situation as most of the rain is forecast east of the most significantly impacted areas in Indiana, western Kentucky, northwestern Tennessee and southern Illinois.
- Drought conditions are beginning to concern the navigation industry in the Ohio and Mississippi Valley, resulting in routine active coordination between the navigation industry and the Corps' Mississippi Valley Division and Ohio River Division.
- Water quality issues with algae blooms and reduced dissolved oxygen continue to persist in the Ohio Valley due to the high temperatures and dry conditions.

Situational Overview and Outlook:

Over the past week, the most significant rainfall was in the central and upper Ohio Valley. Rainfall was very limited in southern Illinois, western Indiana, and western Kentucky, while localized totals of 3 to 5 inches were observed in parts of Kentucky, Tennessee and West Virginia.

Rainfall slowed the progression of the drought in the upper basin this week; however above normal temperatures and little to no rains in the drier lower valley led to an increase in drought classifications. Severe to Extreme Drought remains entrenched across southern Wisconsin and Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, western Kentucky, and Tennessee according to this week's US Drought Monitor. Exceptional drought conditions expanded across southwestern Indiana, western Kentucky, and southern Illinois. The eastern half of the basin ranges from Abnormally Dry to Moderate Drought.

Over the next five days through Wednesday next week, rainfall is forecast to be limited in the Great Lakes and Ohio Valley, with only the Appalachians and neighboring areas of Tennessee, Kentucky, Ohio, and West Virginia receiving 1-2 inches of rain. Rainfall is forecast to be less than a half inch elsewhere.

Water Quality Issues:

Water quality deterioration related to low flow and excessive heat continue to impact several locations.

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Blooms are ongoing at Harsha Lake in Ohio, C.M. Harden Lake in Indiana, Brookville Lake in Indiana, C.J. Brown Lake in Ohio and Salamonie Lake in Indiana and may be developing at Paint Creek in Ohio, Deer Creek in Ohio and at Dillon Lake in Ohio. At Paint Creek, Dillon, and Deer Creek, project managers have been asked to remain alert and report any blooms that occur.

High temperatures and low dissolved oxygen levels have been reported below numerous reservoirs across the division. In the Cumberland system, spillway releases have been used to mitigate water quality concerns, in some cases requiring the discontinuation of hydropower generation.

Reservoir Low Flow Augmentation:

System-wide reservoir flow augmentation available is 87.7%. As of this morning, 23 projects (excluding Wolf Creek, East Branch, and Center Hill) in the Ohio River basin have less than 95% of their augmentation capacity available, and 8 have less than 75%. The following reservoirs have less than 95% remaining:

Pittsburgh District:

KINZUA	90.3 %	
EAST BRANCH	65.6 %	*
STONEWALL	80.0 %	
TYGART	76.4 %	
YOUGHIOGHENY	79.7 %	
WEST BRANCH	68.4 %	
BERLIN	68.0 %	
MILTON	63.2 %	
MOSQUITO CR	74.5 %	
SHENANGO	57.4 %	

Huntington District:

BURNSVILLE	89.6 %
N FK POUND	84.6 %
GRAYSON	86.4 %
PAINT CR	93.3 %

Louisville District:

NOLIN RIV	92.0 %
BARREN RIV	82.6 %
ROUGH RIV	77.0 %
SALAMONIE	32.3 %
MISSISSINEWA	72.2 %
CM HARDIN	61.4 %
MONROE	92.4 %
PATOKA	81.3 %

Nashville District:

LAUREL	78.3 %	
WOLF CREEK	18.7 %	*
DALE HOLLO	74.8 %	
CENTER HIL	24.0 %	*

* Operational pool levels have been lowered due to Interim Risk Reduction Measures

Cumberland System Hydropower storage is at 31.2%.

Ohio River Conditions:

Flows today along the mainstem Ohio River are generally falling, with minor gate operation fluctuations. A slight increase along the Ohio River is forecast between Huntington, WV and Cairo, IL over the next week as rainfall from the past two days is routed down the main-stem. Flows range from 43 percent of normal at Cairo, IL to near normal at Pittsburgh, PA. Ohio River flows over the next week are expected to fluctuate around 10-20kcfs at Pittsburgh (~50-100% of normal), 30-50 kcfs at Smithland (~50-75% of normal), and 50-60 kcfs at Cairo (~50% of normal).

Lower Ohio-Mississippi River Conditions:

The Cairo stage this afternoon is 9.6 feet. The critical stage for navigation at Cairo is 7.5 feet, but recent surveys indicate that currently a 9 foot depth will be maintained to 7 feet on the Cairo gage. According to the National Weather Service, Cairo stages are forecast to increase to around 10.5 feet by the 26th before a sharp fall commences afterwards. The stage at Cairo is forecast to fall to 7.5 feet by the end of July and to around 5.5 feet by 15 August. The Mississippi River at St. Louis is at 2.5 feet this afternoon, is forecast to fall to near zero by the end of the month and to -2.3 feet by 15 August. These forecasts do not include any additional forecast rainfall beyond today.

The Kentucky and Barkley tailwater elevations were at 302.5 and 302.7 feet respectively this afternoon. The critical elevation for the power and navigation industry at Kentucky is 300 feet, and 302 feet at Barkley. Discharges at Kentucky and Barkley Lakes are steady at 18 kcfs and 8 kcfs, respectively, and will be held steady at these minimum levels for the foreseeable future. Releases may fluctuate to hold pool stages near the guide curve elevation or to maintain the tailwater elevation.

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